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## What New Mothers Say: Personal Comments from the North Carolina PRAMS Survey

by

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### ABSTRACT

The PRAMS (Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System) survey is an ongoing, population-based surveillance system sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in conjunction with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. North Carolina PRAMS was established in 1997 to help find out why some babies are born healthy and other babies are not. PRAMS not only uses core questions provided by the CDC to measure the nation's overall maternal and infant health patterns, but it also incorporates state-specific questions to identify maternal and infant health problems in North Carolina. During the course of one calendar year, approximately 2,400 women who had a live birth in North Carolina are randomly selected from birth certificate records, sent a survey, and asked to complete it. Approximately 70 percent, or 1,600 women per year, complete the PRAMS survey.

Each month, PRAMS survey questionnaires are mailed to about 200 mothers, and non-respondents are called on the telephone in an attempt to complete the survey. Of all of the completed PRAMS surveys, about 75 percent are completed by mail and 25 percent by telephone. Information about North Carolina PRAMS, including quantitative survey results, can be accessed at [www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/prams](http://www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/prams).

This report summarizes survey information collected from mothers who participated in the mail portion of the 2004 and 2005 PRAMS surveys. In order to get more in-depth answers to complicated health problems, we asked women to write additional answers, comments, and opinions about their experiences before, during, and after their pregnancy. After all of the comments were reviewed and grouped, the topics with the highest frequencies were selected for inclusion in this report. The ten most common topics are summarized, with a narrative section providing a brief description of the topic, followed by the mothers' comments and opinions. The ten topic areas chosen were: prenatal care, folic acid (multivitamin) use, breastfeeding, smoking, alcohol use, postpartum blues and postpartum depression, toxemia of pregnancy, Medicaid and WIC participation, satisfaction with prenatal services, and comments about the PRAMS survey itself.

The women who volunteered written comments on the PRAMS survey are probably not representative of all women surveyed. Women with a poor birth outcome may be more likely than others to provide comments.



NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES